FOREIGN AFFAIRS INFORMATION
L-37
RMR (V) | DEP | AF
ARA | CUR | FE
NEA 7 | CU | INR 5
E | P 2 | IO
L | PBO | AID
SCA 3 | SCS 1 | H
AGR | COM | FRB
INT | LAB | TAR
TR | AMB | AIR
ARMY | CIA 20 | NAVY 5
OSD 34 | USIA 10 | NSA 3
 | | IUSC 6

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
AIRGRAM

PS 8.4 US ISR
IR Pol 27 ARAB-ISR
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A-1064 NO.

CONFIDENTIAL (with unclassified enclosure)

HANDLING INDICATOR

TO : Department of State

(79) (63)

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/GDC/MR (79)
REVIEWED BY [signature] DATE 9/22/82
RDS or XDS EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. REASON(S)
ENDORSE EXISTING Julrk 28 S1 18
DECLASSIFIED RELEASABLE
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FROM : AmEmbassy TEL AVIV

SUBJECT : U.S.S. Liberty Claim

REF : Embassy A-1009, July 6, 1968

1. We enclose a translation of an article headlined "Israel Hopes U.S. Will Reconsider Matter of Compensation for 'Liberty'" which appeared on the front page of Tel Aviv daily Haaretz on July 23. In substance, the article claims that Israeli Governmental circles expect the U.S. may take into account, in submitting claim for compensation for those wounded and for damage to the U.S.S. Liberty, the communications errors revealed in Congressional testimony which resulted in the ship's not receiving orders to leave the war zone. The article mentions Israel's already having paid approximately $3.25 million in compensation for loss of life in connection with the Israeli attack on the U.S.S. Liberty. There is, however, no indication that the writer was aware of the Embassy's note of July 3 to the Foreign Ministry presenting a claim for $7,644,146 for damage to the U.S.S. Liberty (see airgram under reference).

2. We would not plan to make any public comment on the foregoing or other similar stories. If the matter is raised privately with us by Israeli Government officials or others we will of course point out that whatever communications errors there may have been on the U.S. side in no way affect the Israeli Government's responsibility deriving from the fact that the ship was in international waters when attacked. I made

GROUP 3 downgraded at 12-yr. intervals; not automatically declassified.

Drafted by: POL:KORN/caf/7/23/68

Clearances:

Contents and Classification Approved by: Ambassador Walworth Barbour

UNCLASSIFIED

this point recently in a conversation in which the subject was raised. Former Israeli Minister to Washington Evron who was present did not contest the validity of this contention.

BARBOUR

Enclosure:

Article from Haaretz, July 23

Enclosure to

UNCLASSIFIED TEL AVIV A-1064

Translation of Article from Haaretz, July 23, 1968, by Ben Vered, Political Correspondent of Haaretz

Israeli Government circles expect that the U.S. will reconsider the claim for further compensation for the casualties inflicted and damage caused to the "Liberty" ship during the war last year, in the light of the revelations in the U.S. Congress of the errors in the transmission of orders to that ship. The "Liberty" was hit opposite the El Arish coast by units of the Israel Navy, after she failed to identify herself to the satisfaction of the Israeli commanders who thought that she was an Egyptian ship. Israel apologized (at the time) and also paid about $ 3.25 million compensation for the more than thirty killed in that incident. The U.S. announced at the time that in due course she would submit her claim for compensation for the wounded casualties and the damage caused to property. The ship - whose purpose was electronic espionage - left from here for repairs in the U.S., but was not put back into service.

In testimonies given to the Commission of Inquiry on behalf of the U.S. Congress, the contents of which were published a few days ago, the Naval Commanders reported that instructions had been sent to the ship to get away from the fighting area. However, due to an error in the signals communication the message did not reach the ship. Therefore she had remained in the region where she was later hit.

It is believed in Jerusalem that the U.S. is likely to take that fact into account when she submits further claims to Israel. It has become clear that the U.S. Naval Command realized that a ship that is virtually in the midst of a battle zone endangers herself and therefore the order was given to the ship to get away. The Israeli assault on her was (due to) an error, but that was preceded by a mistake on the part of the Americans themselves as a result of which the order (to get away) did not reach the ship.

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